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C-I-A REVELATIONS -- GOOD OR BAD?

(REVISED)

ANNCR:

AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS LAST WEEK CARRIED NEW ACCOUNTS OF WHAT THEY DESCRIBED AS QUESTIONABLE ACTIVITIES BY THE COUNTRY'S CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, CONTINUING WHAT SEEMINGLY HAS BECOME A STEADY STREAM OF REVELATIONS ABOUT THE ONCE CLOSELY-GUARDED WORK OF THIS AGENCY. VOA ANALYST EDWARD CONLEY HAS THESE OBSERVATIONS:

VOICE:

THE LATEST REPORTS ON THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY QUOTE UNNAMED SOURCES AS SAYING THE CIA WITH ADMINISTRATION BACKING, IS SECRETLY GIVING SIX MILLION DOLLARS IN SUPPORT OF NON-COMMUNIST POLITICAL PARTIES IN ITALY. THE REPORTS, WHICH THE CIA DIRECTOR DENIES, HAVE ADDED ANOTHER SPARK TO THE CURRENT DEBATE IN THE U.S. OVER THE ROLE OF ITS C-I-A. THE CENTRAL QUESTION IS: TO WHAT EXTENT CAN AN INTELLIGENCE AGENCY OPERATE AS A FUNCTIONARY OF A DEMOCRATIC, OPEN STATE? THE WIDE RANGE OF VIEWPOINTS EXPRESSED INDICATES THERE IS NO EASY WAY TO WED AMERICA'S PENCHANT FOR OPENNESS WITH THE SECRECY NEEDED BY AN EFFECTIVE INTELLIGENCE GATHERING AGENCY.

THERE IS, IT SEEMS, A GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT THE UNITED STATES -- AS A MAJOR POWER -- NEEDS AN INTELLIGENCE SERVICE TO GATHER INFORMATION HELPFUL TO ITS NATIONAL DEFENSE AND THAT OF ITS ALLIES. THIS, IN THE FACE OF OTHER ESPIONAGE AGENCIES OPERATING THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

MOST OF THE DISENCHANTMENT DEALS WITH COVERT OR SECRET CIA DEALINGS IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER COUNTRIES -- FOR INSTANCE, THE ITALIAN ALLEGATION. AND, REPORTS OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY INVOLVEMENT IN DOMESTIC SPYING -- PROHIBITED BY LAW -- AND CIA PLOTTING TO ASSASSINATE FOREIGN POLITICAL FIGURES DURING THE 1960'S HAVE SHOCKED THE AMERICAN PUBLIC. THOSE REPORTS AND OTHERS LIKE THEM HAVE LED, -AT ONE EXTREME, TO THE PUBLICATION OF THE NAMES OF CIA OPERATIVES BY A SMALL ORGANIZATION WHICH CALLS ITSELF "COUNTERSPY" AND CHALLENGES THE USE OF INTELLIGENCE AGENTS FOR WHAT IT SEES AS POLITICAL PURPOSES. AT THE SAME TIME, A MORE MODERATE APPROACH TO THE ISSUE HAS REQUIRED THE DIRECTOR OF THE CIA TO REPORT TO SIX CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES ON THE COVERT ACTIVITIES OF THE AGENCY. THIS, IN AN ATTEMPT TO MAKE SURE THE CIA DOES NOT OVERSTEP ITS BOUNDS.

UNFORTUNATELY, NEITHER OF THESE APPROACHES HAS PRODUCED THE RESULTS INTENDED. LAST MONTH, SOON AFTER HIS NAME APPEARED IN A GREEK NEWSPAPER, AN AMERICAN CIA OFFICIAL WAS MURDERED IN GREECE. AND, WHILE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS WHO ARE BRIEFED ON CIA COVERT ACTIVITIES ARE BOUND TO SECRECY, THE AGENCY'S DIRECTOR WILLIAM COLBY SAYS, "ALMOST EVERYTHING REPORTED TO THE CONGRESS IS REPORTED TO THE PRESS."

ONE NEW PROPOSAL IS ARISING OUT OF THE CONTINUING DEBATE ABOUT AMERICAN INTELLIGENCY GATHERING AND THE CIA...THE CREATION OF A JOINT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE WITH ENOUGH POWER TO WATCH CLOSELY AND GIVE DIRECTION TO CENTRAL

INTELLIGENCE AGENCY ACTIVITIES. CIA DIRECTOR COLBY HAS ENDORSED THE IDEA, WHICH PROBABLY WILL HAVE TO AWAIT THE CONCLUSION OF CAPITOL HILL INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE ACTIVITIES OF INTELLIGENCE BODIES. THAT WATCHDOG COMMITTEE COULD PRESUMABLY FALL PREY TO THE SAME PRACTICE OF LEAKING NEWS TO THE PRESS THAT IS OCCURING NOW...A PRACTICE THE WHITE HOUSE FEELS IS HARMFUL TO THE NATION'S SECURITY. BUT AS THE DEBATE CONTINUES, THERE'S A GROWING FEELING, IN THE MEDIA AND CONGRESS AT LEAST, THAT A FIRM CONGRESSIONAL HOLD ON THE REINS OF THE CIA IS THE BEST AVAILABLE WAY TO LET THE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY OPERATE EFFECTIVELY WITHOUT HARRASMENT AT HOME.

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